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CHARACTER

OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

AND THE

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF HIS EMANCIPATION POLICY.

In a country like ours, where the people are the depositaries of sovereignty, and where, from necessity, they must make known their will, in most cases, through their Representatives, it is all-important that they should know the character of their Chief-Magistrate. This knowledge, desirable at all times, is peculiarly so in the present crisis of our country. If the present incumbent of the Presidential chair has the Jeffersonian qualifications of being "honest, capable and faithful to the Constitution," he merits the support of the people. But, if he is wanting in these respects, it is the duty of the people to select a more able and faithful exponent of their views. It is, therefore, highly proper, at this time, to inquire into the character of our present National Executive.

No individual upon this continent, and we may add, no man in the civilized world, is more the object of public observation, at the present time, than the President of the United States. The office, alone, would give him prominence. But his having risen, by his own efforts, from obscurity to his high and dignified position, and the manner in which he has met this momentous crisis, and discharged his duties amid events having no parallel in the history of this or of any other country, mark ABRAHAM LINCOLN as a man of no ordinary character.

Born of respectable but humble parents, in the wilds of the West, where the means of education were almost entirely unknown; thrown, in early life, upon his own resources, with no fortune but his own incorruptible integrity, and with no advantages but what he extorted from adverse circumstances, he has, by his own powers, and the strength of his character, attained an elevation of which any man might be justly proud. In all the intermediate steps,

from obscurity to eminence, he has arisen by his own industry and honest efforts. Though he has filled several important political offices, and has mingled much with public men, he has never been a politician, in the popular sense of that term. Low party management, appeals to the passions and prejudices of men, and those sly and artful intrigues, by which many have sought to elevate themselves, have had no charms for him. He has, uniformly, pursued an open and straight-forward course, and the public honors he has received have been bestowed upon him by an intelligent people, from a conviction of the honesty of his purpose and the purity of his character.

In point of intellect, Mr. Lincoln stands high among our public men. Though deprived, by circumstances, of the advantages of an early education, he, like others in that situation, became a student of human nature, and learned from real life what others have learned from books; and his clear perception, and strong, practical common sense, have been found a good substitute for learned lore; and the incidents of a frontier life furnish him with as apt illustrations as the ripest scholar can draw from the classics; and though they may not have the polish of the gems gleaned from the lumber of Greek and Roman Literature, they are more life-like, and, hence, make a deeper impression upon the mass of the people.

His intellect is of the true Western type. Strengthened by hardships, trained by close observation, and sharpened by contact with kindred spirits, his powers have been well developed, so that he has ever been found adequate to any emergency; and, by steady perseverance and a ready adaptation to surrounding circumstances, he has been able to outstrip many who stood on vantage ground, and who could boast of opportunities far greater than he ever enjoyed.

His public debates show him to be a man of superior powers. Perceiving at once the full force of his opponent's argument, he is ready to meet it in an open and manly manner, and to refute it by cool logic, rather than evade it by subtle sophistry. He seems to be peculiarly fond of a species of *argumentum ad hominem*—not by directly pressing his opponent with his own premises, and so putting him upon his defense, but by adopting his principles, and giving them that easy and familiar turn which gains the assent of his adversary and leads him to adopt, almost unconsciously, conclusions at variance with his original deductions. By that familiar conversational reasoning, he often confutes his opponent, and leads him captive, even before he is aware that his own argument has been overthrown.

Mr. Lincoln is remarkable for his coolness. Always considerate and cautious, he examines every subject with great care, and, when he forms his opinion, he adheres to it with firmness. Like

most self-made men, he investigates and decides for himself; and, having decided, he is ready to act with a fixed and unvarying purpose, regardless of the flattery or the frowns of others. Not, however, that he is dogmatical. His firmness never degenerates into obstinacy. Like self-made men generally, he has decided opinions, but he is free from that self-will which, too often, characterizes men thus educated. Thinking and judging for himself, he freely accords the same right to others, and is ever ready to yield his opinions, when he is convinced that they are unsound.

He is by nature and by habit conservative. Having a respect for the opinions of others, he is unwilling to reject systems or discard usages which have the sanction of the past, unless something better can be offered in their stead. But, while he is conservative, it is the conservatism of the nineteenth century—a conservatism imbued with the spirit of progress, and alive to the real improvements of the age. Being conservatively progressive, he will venture upon new schemes, only when he is fully satisfied that they are founded in wisdom, and adapted to the wants of the people. In this respect, he occupies a happy medium between the two extremes in the country, being too conservative for the radicals of the present age, and too progressive for the fossils of the past.

He is a man of great bodily and mental endurance. He will labor from morning till evening without exhaustion and apparently without fatigue. He is also remarkable for his humor. And this, probably is one cause of his great endurance. In the intervals occurring in the midst of hard labor and intense thought, he unbends his mind at once, and gives himself up to quiet and pleasantry. When interrupted by visitors, he easily throws off the cares of office, appears entirely at leisure, and, putting himself and friends completely at ease, enters into pleasant, and even sportive conversation, as though no cares of state pressed heavily upon his mind. In this way, he entertains his friends agreeably, and at the same time, by relaxation, his own mind is invigorated, so that he can return to his labor with increased energy.

And when beset by applicants for favors, or pressed by officious advisors, a sad penance to which a high public officer is subjected, he meets this torture with a quiet patience; and perceiving at a glance, the merits of the case, dismisses the party with some appropriate anecdote, and so makes a pleasant pastime of what, to men differently constituted, would prove a painful annoyance.

Without this happy frame of mind, the numerous cares of office, and the awful responsibilities which this fearful crisis throws upon him, would undermine his constitution, and soon disqualify him for the discharge of his official duties. Another, and in fact, his main support in his trying situation, is his firm reliance upon that Divine Providence which guides the destiny of nations, and permits the wicked to triumph only to accelerate their fall. Rely-

ing upon the justice of the cause in which we are engaged, he has confidence in the issue of this painful struggle. Being naturally hopeful, he is inclined to look upon the bright side of the subject, and having confidence in the people, he is persuaded that their love of the Union will induce them to make any sacrifice which may be necessary to put down the traitors, who have conspired to overthrow the freest and best government on which the sun ever shone.

Mr. Lincoln is naturally democratic in his feelings and principles. Bred to toil and hardships among the common people, he is intimately acquainted with their wants; and knowing the natural intelligence and honesty of the laboring masses, he sympathizes with their hardships, respects their intelligence, and confides in their patriotism. Claiming no line of illustrious ancestry, he remembers with satisfaction that his origin was humble; and, with truly enlightened feeling, cherishes a filial regard for the fountain from which he sprang. Nor has his success in life, and his sudden elevation to high station created within him that lordly feeling of superiority, and that contempt for his early associates, which frequently follow plebeian preferment. Free, open and accessible, Mr. Lincoln will give audience to the poor man as readily and as cheerfully as to the rich, and the counsel of men in common life will be considered and heeded as truly as though it came from the highest dignitary of the State. Knowing that the rich can take care of themselves better than any other class, he desires so to administer the government as to promote the prosperity of the toiling millions; and he is anxious to sustain our free institutions, that all may partake of the blessings they confer, and that men in humble life may have an opportunity of rising, by their own merits, to the highest office in the gift of the people.

It is hardly necessary to speak of his patriotic devotion to the constitution and the union of the States. To preserve the Union has been the great object of his anxiety and toil during his whole Presidential course. In every measure he has adopted, in all that he has done and in all that he has left undone, he has had this great end in view. When he has called for volunteers, it was to put down the rebels whose sworn object was to overthrow our free government, and to establish a despotic government upon its ruins. When he has caused the arrest of citizens in the free States, it was because they were giving "aid and comfort to the enemy," the very thing which the Constitution denominates *treason*—a crime punishable with death, by the laws of all civilized nations. And when he has suffered other rebels, in the midst of us, to go at large, or has liberated some who have been arrested, it was with a view of subduing the rebellion by the mildest possible means, and of showing to our own people and to the civilized world, that the war was prosecuted with no vindictive spirit, but for the purpose

of restoring union and harmony. When he declared, at the commencement of the rebellion, that he should not interfere with local institutions, it was on the ground that the Constitution gave him no such power, if the civil arm of the Government should prove sufficient to suppress the rebellion; and when, at a subsequent period, he issued his proclamation emancipating slaves in the rebel States, it was in like devotion to the Constitution, which bound him, by a solemn oath, to preserve the Union, and clothed him with the war power, that he might put down every thing which stood in the way of its preservation. Throughout his whole life, he has shown himself devoted to his country and ready to make any sacrifice to sustain her free institutions.

He has always regarded African servitude as a moral and political evil, degrading the slave, and corrupting the master, and so proving a curse to both races. And though his sense of justice and equality remonstrated against this institution, and though he plainly foresaw and foretold that the antagonism between freedom and slavery would end in the extermination of one or the other, his devotion to the Constitution would not allow him to interfere with that institution, while it was confined to the limits of the States where it existed. But, when the bold attempt was made to force this accursed institution into freedom's sacred domain, he raised his voice against it; and when the slaveholders raised their parricidal hands against the country which bore them, and slavery, instead of being shielded by the Constitution, was itself put forward as the shield of the rebellion, his patriotism required him to pierce this shield, that he might strike at the heart of the rebellion itself. And this he has done, not so much to destroy slavery as to *save the Union.*

But the crowning glory of his character is his incorruptible integrity. Descended from the old Puritan stock, he has ever cherished that inflexible devotion to moral principle which neither threats nor flattery could shake. The temptations to which public men are exposed have had no hold upon him. Amid the petty scrambles of office-seekers, the pliant submission of pensioners and placemen, and the bolder designs of corrupt politicians, he has fallen back upon the great principle of rectitude and probity, and spurned the temporary advantages which dishonesty might offer. This reliance upon principle and devotion to the right, which raised him to the Presidential chair, have strengthened and supported him amid its arduous duties. The known probity of his character has repelled the tempter. Though ambitious and designing men, seeking their own interest rather than the public good, have hovered, like birds of prey, around the Government, that they might gain some advantage; and though they may have tampered with some subordinates, no one has ever dared to approach the President himself. And, if any one of that class

had had the presumption to approach him in disguise, hoping to conceal the conceived fraud under cover of a fair exterior, he would find that Mr. Lincoln had, not only the honesty to rebuke open corruption, but the sagacity to penetrate his hidden designs, and the courage to expose the first dawning of venality.

This rectitude of character has not only sustained and strengthened him in the discharge of his arduous duties, but has been a tower of strength to his administration. When our prospects have been gloomy, and the timid were becoming despondent, the conviction that the man at the head of our affairs was patriotic and honest, sustained the weak and confirmed the strong, and gave the government a hold upon the moral and religious element in the community which nothing can sever. This confidence in the integrity of the Executive binds the people to the government and strengthens every arm of the public service. Men and money have been granted, with a full persuasion that the President was honestly devoted to the welfare of the country, and that he would, with fidelity, apply all the means intrusted to him to the sole end of restoring the Union.

This honesty of purpose and devotion to moral principle may be said to be the basis of his character. His firmness is not so much the result of an indomitable will, as of an unwavering integrity. Founded in rectitude and shaped by a rare knowledge of men and things, his policy is truly enlightened and his purpose unchanging. During his whole administration his course has been onward. Though he has not progressed as rapidly as the ardent might desire, he has never made any retrograde movement. When any step has been taken, it is a step in advance, never to be retraced. Comprehending clearly the character of our institutions that the people themselves must rule, he has wisely and prudently felt the public pulse, and has gone as fast and as far as public sentiment would justify and moral principle sanction. In this way he has guided us wisely and has produced a vast change in the public mind.

A genius more erratic and commanding might have infused more energy into the government, and, possibly, harder blows might have been inflicted upon the rebels; but if this had been done by means which would dissatisfy a large portion of the people and so divide the North, we might have been losers in the end. Or, if a man of transcendent power and unconquerable energy had been at the head of the nation, and the rebellion had been crushed, at once, there is reason to fear that the seeds of disunion might have been left to vegetate, and a new harvest of woes might have been ripened for our destruction. Or, what is perhaps more probable, this same towering chieftain, flushed with success, might not only dictate terms of peace to the rebels, but terms of submission to the free States. The same army which he had led to victory, might be employed to raise him to a throne, so that our shouts of triumph

over the prostrate rebels might prove the death-knell of our own freedom.

But such a doom, we trust, is not in store for us. Abraham Lincoln, we reverently trust, was raised up to conduct us to a happier issue. Tried patriots, like perfected saints, are those who have "come out of great tribulation." We have been disciplined, to try our devotion; and the trials we have already endured have taught us our dependence by showing us the impotence of human efforts, and the necessity of relying upon the Divine arm. In the dealings of Providence we can discern His approbation of popular institutions. As our theory of government spurns the despotic idea of the sway of one man, and teaches us that the people themselves must bear rule, so God, in his providence, permits, in our case, no modern Cæsar or second Napoleon to overshadow all others; but stirs up the people themselves to take the destiny of the nation into their own hands, and to conduct the war by their united wisdom, through the honest and prudent, the patriotic and devoted leader of their own choice, so that when the war is brought to a happy termination, we may all rejoice together in the success of the people, and see the doctrine of free republican institutions placed on a more permanent basis than ever before. To such a glorious consummation, we trust the Divine Ruler is conducting us, through the instrumentality of the man placed by his providence at the head of the Republic.

Such, in brief, is the character of Abraham Lincoln, the Chief Magistrate of the United States—a character of which he himself has been both architect and builder; and, though it has no salient angle so protruding as to hide or obscure the other parts of the structure, it has, like a well-proportioned dome, such symmetry of parts and rotundity of figure as will please the beholder and excite general admiration.

I am fully aware of the difficulty of presenting an exact estimate of intellectual power. Having no fixed unit of measure by which to calculate the powers of the mind, we can only fix the intellectual stature of a man by comparing him with others, or by looking at his success in his undertakings. And, as comparisons are generally considered odious, I prefer to test Mr. Lincoln's powers by his success. But, to render this test of any value, we must consider carefully the nature of the undertaking. To succeed in an enterprise presenting no obstacles, would not redound greatly to the honor of the undertaker. But if the task be difficult, or the enterprise be surrounded by obstacles, then success is a good test of mental power.

The obstacles in the pathway of President Lincoln have been of no ordinary character. No man was ever called to the Presidential Chair under circumstances so extraordinary and so trying as those which existed on the 4th of March, 1861. Not only the

state of the country, but the state of political parties was peculiar. The party which elected Mr. Lincoln was not entirely homogeneous. Though the Republicans were all committed against the extension of slavery into free territory, there was a wide range of opinion as to the power of the government over the general subject of slavery, and on the expediency of exercising all the power it did possess. While the radical portion were urging extreme measures, the conservative portion counselled moderation. Then the American element, which would greatly restrict the right of suffrage to our adopted citizens, was calculated to alienate the German and other foreign members of the party. With this variety of views and feelings in the Republican ranks, it would be no easy matter for him to administer the government to the satisfaction of his political friends.

But there were other parties in the country more difficult to please; and though they differed from each other, they were ready to unite in opposing the administration of the incoming President. The supporters of Mr. Breckenridge had, virtually, inscribed the extension of slavery on their banners, and practically, avowed that slavery was more sacred than the Union itself. This party was committed against Mr. Lincoln, irrespective of his policy or the measures of his administration.

The supporters of Mr. Douglas who were carried away by the delusive cry of "popular sovereignty," maintained that Congress had no power over the slavery question, and that the whole matter should be left to the people of the territories, subject only to the decision of the Supreme Court, which had, virtually, decided that the Constitution carried slavery into all the territories, and that nothing but a sovereign State could abolish it. Thus, by denying that Congress had any power over the subject, they stood committed against Mr. Lincoln's avowed policy.

The remaining party, viz., those who rallied under the standard of Mr. Bell, avowed no particular doctrine except their adhesion to the then existing policy, and their desire to compromise with those who had, virtually, avowed that they would sink the Ship of State, if they were not allowed to command it. From this party, Mr. Lincoln could expect but little support.

Such was the political state of the country when Mr. Lincoln was elected. The canvass had been warm and animated, and the feelings of the parties were wrought up to the highest degree of excitement, and embittered by party misrepresentations.

To administer the Government to the satisfaction of the country thus divided, was a delicate, difficult and almost hopeless task. If there had been no other obstacles in his way, the mere division of parties, differing radically on great and vital questions,—questions, too, which he would be compelled to meet,—would present diffi-

culties such as none of his predecessors had ever been called to encounter.

But these were among the least of the embarrassments with which he was surrounded. No sooner was it known that the Republican ticket had prevailed, than the standard of revolt was raised in South Carolina; and her evil example was soon followed by several other slave States. Instead of waiting the developement of his policy, they made the fact of his election the signal for an armed opposition, and before he was inaugurated, seven States had passed ordinances of secession, and were arming themselves for the overthrow of the Government. And even before their secession, several of the States had seized the forts in their harbors and the arms and munitions of war belonging to the United States. In this mad enterprise of dissolving the Union, they had been basely aided by members of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, who had emptied the northern arsenals, and sent the arms to the Southern States, that the rebels might have a supply of arms, and the Government be left destitute. Nay, more: the seceding States had, before Mr. Lincoln was inducted into office, organized a Government, elected Jefferson Davis President, and adopted measures to organize a military force, not merely for defensive, but for offensive operations. They had even commenced open hostilities, not merely by seizing the forts and other property of the United States, but by firing upon the Star of the West, laden with supplies to an almost famishing garrison in one of our own forts.

Nor were these the only embarrassments thrown in Mr. Lincoln's pathway. By a preconcerted system of treachery, the officers of the Army and Navy had been sounded, and whoever could be corrupted had been secured to the rebels before the rebellion showed itself in an overt act. The traitors had also designed the capture of Washington, and as if nothing was too base for them to do, they had planned the assassination of the President elect, on his way to the Capital.

This, in brief, was the state of things, when Mr. Lincoln assumed the reins of government. The storm which had been gathering for months, and which the preceding administration had done nothing to allay, was now ready to burst upon the country. And on what could the President rely to sustain the Union he had sworn to maintain? On the army? What few troops we had, were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land. And, if they had all been in Washington, it was doubtful whether they could be relied upon. Gen. Twiggs had already gone over to the traitors, and had delivered his command into their hands; and it was believed, and subsequent events showed that the belief was well founded, that many others who had sworn to sustain the flag, were secretly pledged to surrender it to the rebels, whenever

a fit opportunity should occur. Could he rely upon the militia of the loyal States? They were, in a great degree, unorganized and unarmed, and bands of ruffians were organized in Baltimore, to destroy the railroads and bridges, and to attack any force that might march to defend the Capital. Could he rely upon the navy? Our ships, by the treachery of the head of that Department, were nearly all dismantled in our ports, or absent in distant seas. So perfectly had the wicked scheme been devised, and partially executed by the rebel leaders, many of whom were in the high places of the Government, that the country was in a defenseless condition.

On what, then, could he rely? On the civil arm? That would be powerless against an armed force. Nor was it certain that the civil officers were trustworthy. He had seen treason in the Cabinet, and it might be lurking in the Departments. Thus situated, the clearest head and the stoutest heart were necessary to sustain the President, and enable him to administer the affairs of the Government.

And this perplexity was increased by the position taken by the border States, which professed to be equally opposed to secession and coercion. In this state of anxiety and suspense, the President was calm and collected, when many of the bravest men trembled for the fate of the country. In this condition of things, a state between peace and war, the hands of the President were tied, and he could do nothing but prepare for any event that might ensue.

But this suspense was broken by the attack upon Fort Sumter. The reverberation of the rebel cannon at Charleston struck the ear of thousands who had up to that period, been deaf to the warnings of patriotic men, who foresaw the gathering storm and called upon the people to rally beneath the folds of the bright ensign of freedom.

But although the thunders of Sumter had broken the calm, and relieved the awful suspense, a new field of labor, and new and untried dangers and responsibilities were thrown upon Mr. Lincoln as Executive Magistrate and Commander-in-Chief of our land and naval forces. Congress was not in session, and could not be convened short of several weeks. The whole responsibility rested upon him.

A call was made for volunteers, but the border States refused to respond. The loyal States were ready to obey, but were, in a great degree, destitute of arms. But, thanks to the patriotic North, and especially to Massachusetts, whose troops were first in the field, our Capital was secured from threatened danger.

From that day to this, Mr. Lincoln has been surrounded by trials and difficulties, such as no other man in America was ever called to encounter. And how has he met these complicated difficulties and dangers? He has never faltered or deviated from the

plain path of duty. Sworn to support the Union, his highest object has been to suppress the rebellion and restore the union of the S ates. And so steadily has he pursued that end, that none but the unprincipled few who love their party better than their country, have ever doubted his patriotism or fidelity.

Admit if you please, that the rebellion has proved more formidable than he, at first, anticipated, and hence, that he erred in not employing more efficient or stringent means in the first instance. Who is there, in the country, who did not at that time, under-estimate the magnitude of this gigantic revolt. If Mr. Lincoln erred, in this particular, he erred in common with every public man, at that day.

Who could have anticipated that England who boasted of her abhorrence of human slavery, would have looked with so much complacency upon the treason of the slaveholding South? Or that France, our old ally in the cause of Freedom, would have shown any disposition to encourage the dismemberment of our republic? Or who could have believed that there were men in the midst of us so wedded to the old party ties as to be willing to put our country's honor, and even her existence, in jeopardy, for the purpose of reviving an expiring party? Or who could have anticipated that the love of gain would have so completely engrossed the minds of some men in the free States as to induce them to supply articles contraband of war to the enemies of their country, and thereby enable them to hold out in their inglorious attempt to overthrow the freest government on earth?

Mr. Lincoln may have been too lenient here, or too unyielding there, as events afterwards may have shown. But such errors are common to the wisest men; and it is much easier to point out an error, after events have shown it to be such, than it is to perceive it before the event occurs, and when the prospects point to a different result. To assert that Mr. Lincoln has not, in any case, erred in judgment, would be claiming for him a wisdom greater than human. We have not the presumption to claim for him infallibility.

But, considering the embarrassments under which he has labored, the complication of difficult circumstances with which he has been surrounded, and the accumulation of new and perplexing questions which he has had to meet, we believe no statesman of the past, and no man in the country at the present day, would, on the whole, have succeeded better. And if we judge of his ability by his success, we shall be compelled to place Abraham Lincoln among the first and wisest statesmen of our country. Others would, perhaps, have theorized more profoundly, and given us more finished and learned state papers; but, in meeting all the phases of our complicated affairs, in allaying the prejudices of the people, and carrying the community along with him, I doubt

whether any man would have accomplished more than has been accomplished by our present Chief Magistrate. His character is somewhat original, and his mode of treating questions is a little peculiar, but the end at which he has arrived has been right, and the success of the means he has adopted to attain that end, has proved that they were wise.

It would show an ignorance of men and things, and narrowness of comprehension, to test Mr. Lincoln's administration by that of any of his predecessors. Never before have our relations with foreign powers been of such a delicate and critical nature, involving issues of so momentous a character. And when we turn our attention to our own domestic affairs, the mind is almost overwhelmed with the magnitude of the subject. A nation of nearly thirty millions of people in arms! Armies, counted by hundreds of thousands, in the field! A territory, of millions of square miles, patrolled by armies or guerillas! Expenditures counted by hundreds of millions, to prosecute the war! The past furnishes no parallel to such a state of things; and men who could administer the government with credit to themselves in times past, might justly stand aghast at the stupendous responsibility of the present Executive. To say that Mr. Lincoln has not met this crisis with energy, and been fully prepared for the changing events which have been precipitated upon him, is simply saying that he has been partially baffled, where most others would have been overwhelmed, and that he has not anticipated what was beyond the ken of the human mind. Every man who reflects upon the subject, will also perceive that there are embarrassments of a domestic nature, such as do not inhere in any foreign war. Mr. Lincoln has had not only rebel armies to vanquish, but loyal citizens to save; not only rebel States to subdue, but these same States to preserve, and bring back into the Union. To accomplish these objects requires a two fold policy—each phase of which must interfere somewhat with the other, thereby rendering the whole subject more complex and difficult.

But, notwithstanding all these embarassments, wherein has the President failed in the full discharge of his duty? What act of his administration has been faulty? He has been accused of making arbitrary arrests, in the free States. But, it must be considered that thousands of spies and traitors have been lurking in the midst of us, not only to aid, in general, the common enemy, but to commit arson and assassinations, and to betray our brave soldiers and patriotic Union citizens into the hands of the ruthless foe. Many of these spies have been harbored and aided by men enjoying the protection of our Government. Some of these have been arrested and confined, for a period, and then discharged. Under any other government they would have been executed, and under some other Executives than Mr. Lincoln, they would have

been dealt with more severely than they have been. To permit men enjoying the protection of our laws, to labor by word and deed to prevent enlistment, and thereby weaken our army, or to excite insurrection in the midst of us, thereby requiring the withdrawal of a portion of our troops from the field, or to allow them to furnish munitions of war to the rebels, or give them information more serviceable to them than arms—to suffer our own citizens to pursue such a course unmolested, in such a crisis as this, would argue an imbecility on the part of the Executive, or an indifference to the vital interests of the country akin to treason itself. The course pursued by Mr. Lincoln is the perfection of forbearence, compared with the policy pursued by the rebels towards the Union men of the South; and yet the very men who arraign Mr. Lincoln for the few arrests he has ordered, have no words even of gentle rebuke for the arch traitor who has imprisoned or impressed into his armies thousands of citizens simply because they were true to the government against which he has basely rebelled!

But the great question on which the public mind has been most divided is that of emancipation of slaves. As some men deny the power of the President to manumit slaves, it becomes necessary to examine this subject with care, and to mark the distinction between his powers as a Civil Magistrate and his power as Commander-in-Chief of our military forces—his power in peace, and his power in war. We allow that, in times of peace, he has no right to emancipate a slave in a slave State. Slavery being a State institution, the President, in times of peace, has no power to interfere with local law. But it by no means follows that his power is thus circumscribed in time of war. The very nature of war legalizes acts which would be criminal in time of peace. In time of peace, the Chief Magistrate of the nation would have no legal power to send a body of men into Virginia, for example, to seize horses and provisions, and to shoot down those who offered resistance. Such acts would be robbery and murder, and the high office of President would not, and should not shield him from condign punishment. But in war, troops are sent out for this very purpose, and the laws of war justify the act. This single illustration shows that the power of the President is greatly enlarged in time of war.

But it is claimed that, under the *Constitution*, the President has no right to interfere with State institutions. We admit he has no such right in time of peace. But the Constitution clothes the Government with the war power, as clearly and as fully as with the peace power, and makes the President as truly Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, as the Chief Magistrate of the people. The same Constitution which gives Congress the power to "regulate commerce," "coin money," "establish Post offices," and "constitute judicial tribunals" gives them the power to

"declare war," "raise and support armies," and "provide and maintain a navy." The same Constitution also makes the President the Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy. The war power is as fully granted to Congress as the peace power—the military as the civil.

Having enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace since the establishment of the Government, Congress, by legislation, has carried out the peace powers in detail, to meet the wants of the people. But the condition of the country has not called for detailed legislation on the war powers of the Government. But still the power exists; and, in the absence of statutes, public law comes in and supplies the deficiency, in the same manner that common law does, in ordinary cases. By the Law of Nations, the power of belligerents, in time of war, is clearly defined and well understood. The Commander-in-Chief may do any thing, in an exigency, which will either strengthen himself or weaken his enemy, provided the act does not outrage humanity. And even the question of humanity is materially modified by the exigencies of the case. It would be inhuman to bombard a city filled with women and children, when they were not contributing, in any degree, to the support of your enemy. But, if the enemy took refuge in the city, and made it their castle or the mart of their supplies, it would then be lawful to lay the city in ashes, if the enemy could not be dislodged in any other manner. Such are the well-established laws of war.

Applying these laws to the case in question, if the President believed that manumitting slaves would strengthen the Union cause, or weaken that of the rebels, he has full power, under the Constitution, to do it. In his Inaugural Address; he declared that he had no disposition, or power, to interfere with slavery in the States. This was true, at that time, for war had not commenced. And, subsequently, when the rebels attacked Fort Sumter, it could hardly be said that the exigency of the case required such an interference with their institutions. But, as the war progressed, it became apparent that the exigency was increasing. It was also apparent that the enemy was employing his slaves to construct his defenses, and to produce and transport supplies; and, in some cases, to defend the works they had constructed. To detach this portion of his reliance from him would reduce his power of resistance; and the President has the same right to do it that he would have to destroy the enemy's supplies; and one would weaken him as surely as the other. The President would, also, have the same right to use, offensively or defensively, these emancipated slaves, with their consent, that he would have to use the horses or the arms he had captured. There can be no doubt of the power, under the Constitution, and being the sole judge of the exigency, if he believed that freeing the slaves, and employing them in our army, would weaken the rebels and so contribute to the preserva-

tion of the Government, duty to his country and fidelity to his oath of office required him to do it.

But Mr. Lincoln, though conscious of the power, forebore to exercise it till the exigency became palpable. Knowing the delicacy of the subject, arising from the extreme sensitiveness of some people, North as well as South, he gave the country full warning that some decisive step would be taken, unless measures were adopted to prevent the necessity. He recommended to Congress, as early as May, 1862, a system of gradual emancipation, providing compensation to the owners. In September, of the same year, he issued a Proclamation, apprizing the States then in rebellion that, unless they returned to their allegiance to the United States, he should, on the first of January, 1863, proclaim freedom to the slaves within their borders. His Emancipation Proclamation, therefore, was not issued till after due warning had been given, and other means had failed. He issued it, believing it to be "a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing the rebellion." This Proclamation was in strict accordance with the Constitution and the law of nations; and, under all the circumstances of the case, is a proof of the forbearance as well as the wisdom and fidelity of the Commander-in-Chief.

The emancipation of slaves, however desirable in itself, has not been resorted to as an end, but as a means to subdue the rebels. The war is prosecuted, not to destroy slavery, but to save the Union. The cry which has been raised, in some quarters, that the President was prosecuting the war for the purpose of liberating slaves, is a mere pretense, as superficial and ridiculous as it would be to assert that he is prosecuting the war for the purpose of burning powder or exploding shells. Both are means to secure a grand object; and if a noble end can be attained by the employment of noble means, it reflects the highest honor upon him who uses them.

The course Mr. Lincoln has pursued, in relation to slavery, is honorable alike to his statesmanship and moderation. After giving the rebels due warning, and carefully considering the subject, he has so shaped his policy as to bring himself clearly within the Constitution. The measure was a bold one, but his sagacity enabled him to foresee that its effects would be salutary, and his devotion to the cause of liberty prompted him to adopt this extreme measure to crush the rebellion. And, though the subject is one on which the public mind has been divided, he has managed it with so much moderation and prudence as to carry the people with him, and so has produced a great moral revolution, without any convulsion in the community. The effects of this measure upon the great end in view, have been all that could have been anticipated by the most sanguine, and, as our armies advance, these beneficial results will become more and more obvious, and the wisdom of the President

is, day by day, becoming more apparent. And, although a few rebel sympathizers and a small class who live only in the past, have arraigned the President for his Emancipation Proclamation, when the future historian shall record this rebellion, the character of Abraham Lincoln will fill a bright chapter, and his emancipation policy will stand as the crowning glory of his administration.

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